

# A CONTRIBUTION TO THE ORNITHOLOGY OF DOI SUTHEP AND CHIENG MAI

by

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and

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## SUMMARY

Comments are made on 21 species of birds from amongst those seen or collected. These comments deal with altitudinal distribution, are merely extra records of birds hitherto thought rare in the region, or extend somewhat the spring passage dates for migrants or winter visitors. A list of species collected for the Royal Forest Department is appended.

## Introduction

This area is perhaps the best known ornithologically of any area in Thailand. This is mainly thanks to the work and writings of H.G. DEIGNAN, and any comments that are made here represent but small additions to the wealth of knowledge contained in "The Birds of Northern Thailand" (1945) by that author.

During the last few years a large amount of field work has been done in Thailand by the M.A.P.S. programme. Ben F. KING, who was Chief of this programme in Thailand from March 1964 to June 1966, is in the course of preparing his records for publication. Some of his work has been done in the area with which we are concerned and chronologically it comes first, hence it may be that where we talk of a "third" record for a species from Doi Suthep it may be shown later to have been the fourth, sixth or tenth such record.

The authors spent the period February 19th to March 5th 1966 at the Royal Forest Department Bungalows on Doi Suthep, at a height of 3,100 ft. in company with M.W. WOODCOCK and others. Two excursions from the mountain were made by DICKINSON and WOODCOCK; one, to the area of northwest Thailand dealt with by

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DICKINSON (1966), produced no fresh information; the other to Nong Bua near Doi Saket on the Chieng Mai plain resulted in the notes on two of the following species.

### Notes on Selected Species

#### Garganey (*Anas querquedula*)

Several were found with a large flock of Whistling Teal (*Dendrocygna javanica*), some Cotton Teal (*Nettapus coromandelianus*) and one Pintail (*Anas acuta*) on Nong Bua, near Doi Saket, Chieng Mai on February 26th-this is a few days later than the last spring date mentioned by DEIGNAN (op. cit.).

#### Chinese Goshawk (*Accipiter soloensis*)

This species is readily distinguished from its allies by its underwing pattern, well illustrated in GROSSMAN & HAMLET (1965). We observed this bird at 4,500 ft., or above, on Doi Suthep on February 20th, 21st and 23rd. DEIGNAN records three specimens.

#### Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

This species is not listed in DEIGNAN'S "Checklist of the Birds of Thailand" (1963), but it has been taken by KING (paper in preparation), and DEIGNAN informs us (pers. comm.) that he has a sight record from Chieng Mai. A single bird was seen at about 4,000 ft. on Doi Suthep on February 19th and again at a similar altitude on February 27th.

#### Mountain Scops Owl (*Otus spilocephalus*)

One was taken in a mist net at about 3,500 ft. on March 3rd, having been caught in the net during the night. DEIGNAN (1945) believed this species to be rare in Northern Thailand, but the use of mist nets over the last few years has revealed a wider presence than suspected (DICKINSON (1964) and MARSHALL pers. comm.).

#### Chestnut-headed Bee-eater (*Merops leschenaulti*)

DEIGNAN (1945) concludes his remarks on the rather local distribution of this species in Northern Thailand by reporting one or two at 2,000 ft. on Doi Suthep in October 1936. Two birds were seen by us a little below this elevation beside the road down Doi Suthep on March 1st and 2nd. In view of the rather meagre knowledge of this species and its distribution this record is added.



**Bay Woodpecker (*Blythipicus pyrrhotis*)**

1 was seen at 5,300 ft. on Doi Suthep on 27.2.66, DEIGNAN mentions that this species had only been recorded five times from this mountain.

**Wire-tailed Swallow (*Hirundo smithii*)**

2 or 3 birds were found perched on a telephone wire beside the Chiang Mai-Doi Saket road on 26.2.66. This date would appear to be somewhat later than DEIGNAN recorded them but he anticipated that in due course this species would be found to breed in the area.

**Great Tit (*Parus major*)**

This bird was seen regularly during our stay in the vicinity of the kitchens attached to the Royal Forest Department bungalows. It showed indications of breeding in that it was several times seen carrying nesting material. DEIGNAN (1945) says "on Doi Suthep it is known only from a solitary bird at 5,200 feet, January 25, 1936, and a party of four at 3,800 feet, August 8, 1936". The Forest Department bungalows are at 3,100 feet.

**Yellow-cheeked Tit (*Parus xanthogenys*)**

This species was also seen regularly but higher. Small parties of adults and recently fledged young were several times met and two occupied nests found. Nest A. was at about 4,800 feet on Doi Suthep. It was about 10 feet from the ground in a hole in the trunk of a tree leaning 30 degrees from the vertical, about 5 inches diameter at the height of the nest, and within 3 yards from the road. The parents were feeding young. Nest B. was somewhat lower on the mountain; it was also about 10 feet above the ground in a hole in a tree of similar girth. This tree rose from the floor of a broad gully rather overgrown with thick marshy plants.

**Tickell's Babbler (*Trichastoma tickelli*)**

A female was collected at Kok Ma, on Doi Suthep on February 28th. Deignan lists only one record from this mountain, at 3,800 ft. Our bird was at about 3,400 ft.

**Silver-eared Mesia (*Leiothrix argentauris*)**

One bird was caught at about 4,600 feet on Doi Suthep on February 27th. and the following day several were seen in the same vicinity. This location was considerably lower than could be termed

"the topmost ridge" to which DEIGNAN reported the species to be strictly confined, and upon which we did not ourselves find the species.

Red-flanked Bluetail (*Tarsiger cyanurus*)

One bird, sex not determined, was collected on February 27th by a Thai collector working for the Royal Forest Department. The label written by him gives the altitude as 6,000 feet to which height the mountain does not stretch but one must assume that the bird was taken near the top. It is in female plumage but without comparative material we are not able to assign it to a race.

Plumbeous Redstart (*Rhyacornis fuliginosus*)

A female was seen on 28.2.66 at the waterfall beside the road a little below the Phra That. Dr. LAMBERTON of Chiang Mai assured us that he had seen the species there several times before; Doi Suthep is not however included in the localities listed by DEIGNAN (1945).

White-tailed Blue Robin (*Myiomela leucura*)

The only locality on the mountain in which we found this species was Kok Ma, and there it was never seen, only netted. A female taken on 28.2.66 and a male taken the following day were collected; a second female caught on March 3rd was ringed and released. DEIGNAN (1945) lists a single record from Doi Suthep; that this should have been the sole record is certainly in large part due to the bird's shyness.

Chestnut-bellied Rock Thrush (*Monticola rufiventris*)

An unsexed bird was taken on Doi Suthep on February 23rd. It is in female plumage. The height at which the Thai collector took it is not recorded. A second bird seen at the summit of Doi Suthep on February 21st and 23rd was still present on March 3rd. This latter date is nearly a month later than the spring date given by DEIGNAN and bears out his supposition that the birds stayed longer in spring than he was able to prove.

White-throated Flycatcher (*Muscicapa solitaria*)

One male was taken on February 24th at about 4,800 feet. DEIGNAN (1945) mentions that the species had only twice been found on Doi Suthep.

White-browed Flycatcher (*Muscicapa superciliaris*)

A male in full plumage was seen at 5,300 feet on March 3rd in rather open oak woodland not unlike the habitat in which the species was found several times further west (DICKINSON 1966), but substantially higher. This appears to be the fourth record for this mountain,



*Small Niltava (Muscicapa macgrigoriae)*

A pair were taken in nets at Kok Ma, the female on February 28th and the male the following day. What must have been another male was seen in the same locality on March 5th. DEIGNAN (1945) gives a single record from Doi Suthep.

*Pigmy Blue Flycatcher (Muscicapella hodgsoni)*

Two were seen just below the summit of Doi Suthep on February 20th. These birds were in company with Nun Babblers (*Alcippe* sp.) and a Golden-headed Babbler (*Stachyris chrysaea*); only the male was seen well but its very small size and the lack of any white on the forehead were sufficient to separate it from the superficially similar White-fronted Flycatcher. DEIGNAN only lists two males taken on Doi Langka.

*Crested Bunting (Melophus lathami)*

This bird was seen regularly beside the road up to the Palace. It frequented the area close to the turn-off up the hill, where the forest has been cleared and lalang has grown up. On February 27th seven individuals were counted at the same time. It is perhaps no longer true to call it a "rare visitor" to Doi Suthep.

### Acknowledgements

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## APPENDIX 1

**List of species collected for the Royal Forest Department**

<i>Chalcophaps indica</i>	<i>Macronous gularis</i>
<i>Phaenicophaeus tristis</i>	<i>Garrulax strepitans</i>
<i>Otus spilocephalus</i>	<i>Pteruthius flaviscapis</i>
<i>Megalaima virens</i>	<i>Minla cyanouroptera</i>
<i>Megalaima franklinii</i>	<i>Yuhina castaniceps</i>
<i>Picumnus innominatus</i>	<i>Yuhina zantholeuca</i>
<i>Picus canus</i>	<i>Alcippe morrisonia</i>
<i>Picus chlorolophus</i>	<i>Heterophasia melanoleuca</i>
<i>Dendrocopos atratus</i>	<i>Paradoxornis gularis</i>
<i>Serilophus lunatus</i>	<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i>
<i>Psarisomus dalhousiae</i>	<i>Myiomela leucura</i>
<i>Tephrodornis virgatus</i>	<i>Enicurus leschenaulti</i>
<i>Pericrocotus solaris</i>	<i>Saxicola ferrea</i>
<i>Pericrocotus ethologus</i>	<i>Monticola rufiventris</i>
<i>Pericrocotus flammeus</i>	<i>Myophonus caeruleus</i>
<i>Hypsipetes mccllellandii</i>	<i>Zoothera dauma</i>
<i>Hypsipetes flava</i>	<i>Seicercus burkii</i>
<i>Dicrurus remifer</i>	<i>Muscicapa thalassina</i>
<i>Oriolus traillii</i>	<i>Muscicapa solitaria</i>
<i>Crypsirina occipitalis</i>	<i>Muscicapa macgrigoriae</i>
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	<i>Muscicapa sundara</i>
<i>Parus xanthogenys</i>	<i>Muscicapa unicolor</i>
<i>Certhia discolor</i>	<i>Muscicapa banyumas</i>
<i>Trichastoma tickelli</i>	<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i>
<i>Pomatorhinus schisticeps</i>	<i>Rhipidura albicollis</i>
<i>Napothera epilepidota</i>	<i>Terpsiphone paradisi</i>
<i>Stachyris chrysaea</i>	<i>Zosterops palpebrosa</i>
<i>Stachyris nigriceps</i>	<i>Melophus lathami</i>

The birds collected on this trip bear the specimen numbers 188 to 267 inclusive, in the collection of the Royal Thai Forest Department.